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1914

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WHEN SHE COMES HOME

By

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

Decorated by

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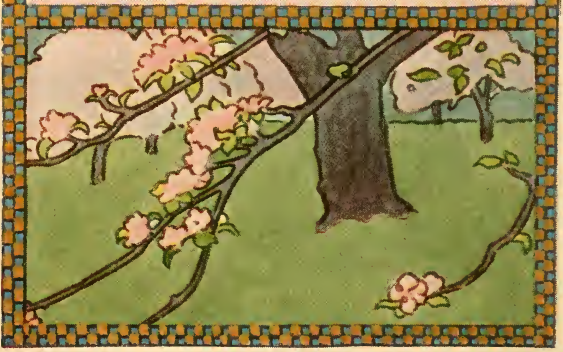
WHEN SHE COMES HOME

WHEN she
comes home
again!
A thousand ways

I fashion, to myself,
the tenderness

Of my glad welcome:
I shall tremble—yes;

And touch her, as
when first in the
old days

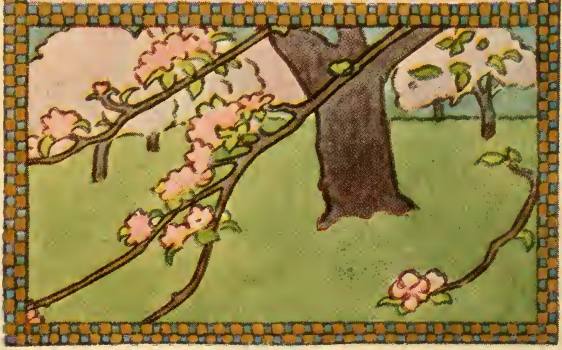


I touched her girlish
hand, nor dared
upraise

Mine eyes, such
was my faint heart's
sweet distress.

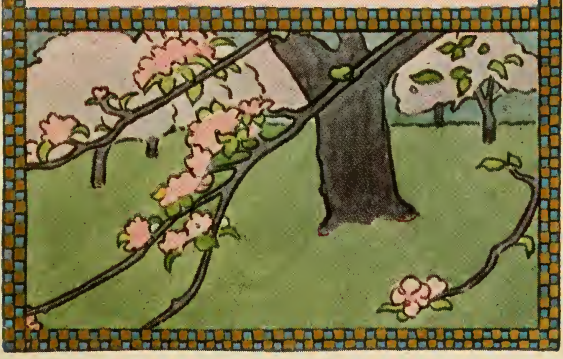
Then silence: and
the perfume of
her dress:

The room will sway
a little, and a haze



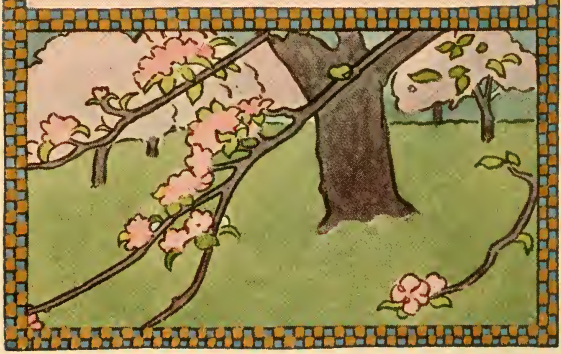
Cloy eyesight—
soul-sight, even
—for a space;

And tears—yes;
and the ache here
in the throat,



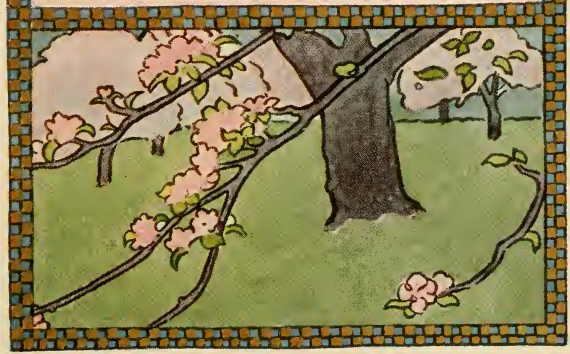
To know that I so
ill deserve the place

Her arms make
for me; and the
sobbing note



I stay with kisses,
ere the tearful face

Again is hidden in
the old embrace.

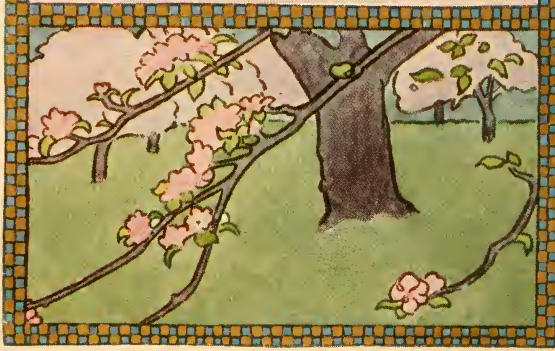


HER BEAUTIFUL HANDS

YOUR HANDS—
they are strangely fair!

Fair—for the jewels
that sparkle there,—

Fair—for the
witchery of the spell



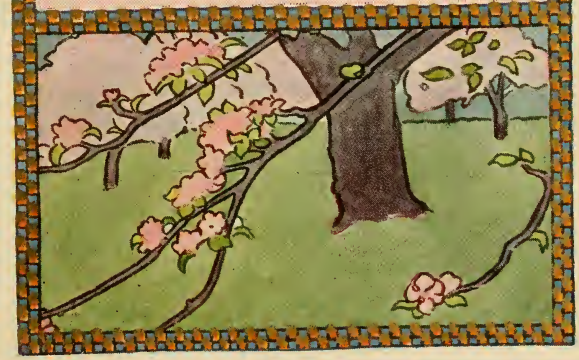
That ivory keys
alone can tell;

But when their
delicate touches rest

Here in my own
do I love them best,

As I clasp with eager,
acquisitive spans

My glorious treasure
of beautiful hands!

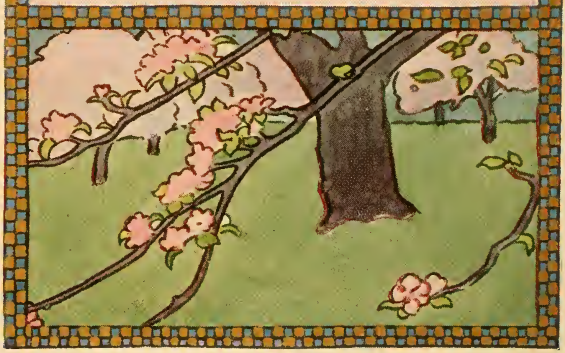


Marvelous—
wonderful—
beautiful hands!

They can coax
roses to bloom
in the strands

Of your brown
tresses; and ribbons
will twine,

Under mysterious
touches of thine,



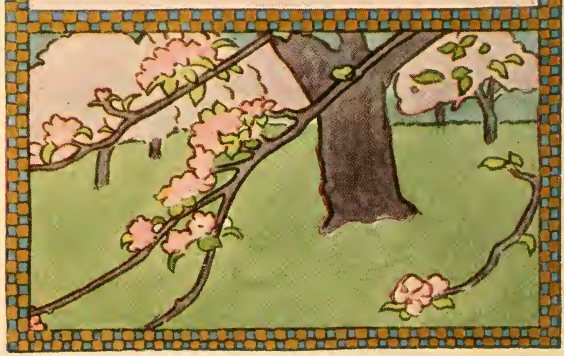
Into such knots as
entangle the soul

And fetter the
heart under such
a control

As only the
strength of my
love understands—

My passionate
love for your
beautiful hands.

As I remember
the first fair touch
Of those beautiful
hands that I love
so much,
I seem to thrill as I
then was thrilled,
Kissing the glove that
I found unfilled—
When I met
your gaze, and
the queenly bow,



As you said to me,
laughingly, "Keep
it now!" . . .
And dazed and alone
in a dream I stand,
Kissing this ghost of
your beautiful hand.

When first I loved,
in the long ago,
And held your hand
as I told you so—
Pressed and caressed
it and gave it a kiss

And said "I could die
for a hand like this!"
Little I dreamed
love's fullness yet
Had to ripen when
eyes were wet
And prayers
were vain in their
wild demands
For one warm
touch of your
beautiful hands.

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